



"Children are the living messages we send to a time we will not see."

Neil Postman, *the Disappearance of Childhood* (introduction), 1982



## Issue Eight

April 2014

### Safe & Sound: Creating Positive Learning Environments in an Era of Terror

Dr. Steve Parese, for the National At-Risk Education Network [www.steve.parese.com](http://www.steve.parese.com)

[Click here to read full article](#)

Despite our fears, the greatest threat to the sense of safety and security necessary for learning is not the remote possibility of a gunman entering a public school. It is the culture of fear created when schools and teachers ignore daily physical intimidation, regular verbal derogation, deliberate social rejection, and dehumanizing cyber-assaults, all injustices visited upon the most vulnerable of our students. These everyday acts of abuse and neglect require a systemic preventive approach at the school, classroom, and individual level.

In the mid-1990's, the American Psychological Association released two important volumes, *Violence and Youth: Psychology's Response* and *Reason to Hope: A Psycho-social Perspective on Violence and Youth*. The latter described a three-tiered approach to adolescent violence prevention. The APA's recommendations have been supported by 20 years of empirical research, and are the foundation of the U.S. Department of Education's efforts toward creating safe schools.

#### current topics >>>

##### Your School/Our Education Connection

Huge obstacles facing children	
Of color in Nebraska	2
Expansive Survey of America's Public Schools Reveals Troubling Racial Disparities	2
Ditching letter grades	3
Using Tablets to reach kids with autism	4
How some college are offering free Textbooks	5
<b>Educational Resources</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Health Watch</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Grants and Funding</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Meeting Place</b>	<b>8</b>

These three levels of interventions include:  
Primary strategies targeting all students (e.g., bullying prevention programs, social emotional learning, conflict resolution classes).  
Secondary strategies targeting at-risk students (e.g., anger management classes, mentoring programs, academic

remediation).

Tertiary strategies targeting students already involved with

serious problems (e.g., restorative justice, individual therapy).

#### Effective school safety programs

A substantial body of literature has revealed that the most effective school safety and anti-bullying programs use a whole-school approach consisting of five key components, incorporating many of the APA recommendations.

#### Safe Schools Element #1:

Assess Safety and Security Risks

To ensure safety and security, school leaders must first gather information to assess risks. Among other questions, we should ask:

- Which behaviors or threats should be taken as serious safety and security concerns? Some distracting or disruptive behavior problems are developmentally normal at various ages, and can be tolerated or redirected without the need for serious intervention plans. The second grader who threatens *Im gonna nuke this school!* certainly does not have the intent or means to commit such an act; giving him serious consequences would be an overreaction. On the other hand, a different dynamic exists when a high school student with known gang affiliations threatens *Im gonna bust a cap in your @\$@ after school*. Knowing students backgrounds and histories allows an administrative team to make quick and accurate assessments of actual danger, then respond accordingly.
- When/where are the greatest risks to security? When/where does unsafe or unkind behavior take place? Research suggests that the majority of fights and bullying takes place in hallways between classes, in cafeterias, in bathrooms, on playgrounds or parking lots, or on school buses -- places where fewer staff are present and students are poorly supervised. Planning for an increased staff presence during these times and places may significantly reduce harmful behavior. Planning for increased staff presence during high-risk times and places may significantly reduce harmful behavior.
- Which students (and perhaps staff) are the greatest perpetrators of physical and emotional bullying? What situations or people seem to provoke this behavior? There is no typical bully profile, but experts observe that many

Continue page 2

**Continue from Page 1  
Safe & Sound: Creating  
Positive Learning  
Environments in an  
Era of Terror**

bullies are easily frustrated and have poor impulse control, are often egocentric, non-empathetic and intolerant of others, and are frequently motivated by both popularity and power. 4 Being especially attentive to the precursors of bullying and the warning signs of crisis will help staff intervene earlier. Identifying the greatest perpetrators of bullying will allow schools to plan not only discipline but also remedial interventions.

- d) d. Who are the most common victims of physical and emotional bullying? Bullying victims are often physically and socially different from their peers, including students from stereotyped religious and ethnic groups; those whose sexual identities are (or appear to be) GBLTQ; students with special education needs, academic gifts, and/or social skills deficits needs; and loners or unpopular youth.

Keeping a special eye on these students allows staff to not only protect them from on-going bullying, but to provide them with proactive skill-building opportunities that may ultimately reduce their likelihood of being targeted.

## Report: Huge obstacles facing children of color in Nebraska, U.S.

Lincoln Journal Star, Erin Andersen  
April 1, 2014

[http://journalstar.com/news/local/report-huge-obstacles-facing-children-of-color-in-nebraska-u/article\\_9814d5bf-640e-5eb8-88ce-77155015e573.html](http://journalstar.com/news/local/report-huge-obstacles-facing-children-of-color-in-nebraska-u/article_9814d5bf-640e-5eb8-88ce-77155015e573.html)

Report: <http://www.aecf.org/> (download or read PDF)

For white kids, Nebraska provides a solid foundation for success and opportunity.

But for black, Latino or Native American children in Nebraska, the odds against them are staggering, according to a Kids Count report, "Race for Results: Building a Path of Opportunity for All Children."

In fact, kids of color in Nebraska fare poorer than many of their peers in other states.

The report, released Tuesday, highlights the ongoing economic, educational, developmental and health disparities facing kids of color in America. While it's hardly new news that black, Latino and Native American kids are disproportionately represented in statistics for those failing or dropping out of school, being unemployed or incarcerated, and growing up in poverty — there is an urgent need to reverse the historic trend, said Patrick McCarthy, president and CEO of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, which releases the Kids Count reports.

By 2018, the majority of American kids will be of color.

By 2030, people of color will represent the majority of the U.S. workforce. And by 2050, no single racial group will comprise a majority of the population, according to "Race for Results."

By continuing to fail these kids, the country is ultimately setting itself up for failure, the report

indicated. The report calls for "an urgent, multi-sector approach" to developing solutions.

In Nebraska, all kids of color face more barriers than the nation on average. That includes Asian-American children who as a whole outscore all racial groups in America, including whites, in well-being.

### National Scorecard on educational proficiency, poverty, family life and health.

Race	U.S.	Nebraska
White	704	746
Asian American	776	750
Blacks	345	323
Latinos	404	368
Native American	387	To small to measure

## Expansive Survey of America's Public Schools Reveals Troubling Racial Disparities

Lack of Access to Pre-School  
March 21, 2014

U.S. Department of Education <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/data.html?src=rt/>

The Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) from the 2011-12 school year was announced by U.S. Department of Education Secretary Arne Duncan and U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder at J.O. Wilson Elementary School in Washington, D.C.

## COST OF PARENTING WHILE TEXTING

- 40 out of 50 adults are using cell phones while eating out with their children for extended period of time. Cost—high
- Adults to pay more attention to cell phones than share/interacted with their children. Cost-high

*“Please put that away. I’m trying to talk to you.”*

*Overheard by a Boston scientist from a 4-year-old to their parent.*

## Ditching letter grades for a “window” into the classroom

Head of the Class Schools Thought from CNN, Emanuella Grinberg

Complete report at [http://www.cnn.com/2014/04/07/living/report-card-changes-standards-based-grading-schools/index.html?hpt=hp\\_bn11](http://www.cnn.com/2014/04/07/living/report-card-changes-standards-based-grading-schools/index.html?hpt=hp_bn11)

... The messages come at least once a week, sometimes more, and provide Wolfram with more than just a brag book of images. It's real-time insight into her daughter's learning, enabling her to think ahead about how she can help Serenity at home.

The messages started going out to some parents at Georges Vanier Elementary School in Surrey, British Columbia, in fall 2013 as part of a pilot program. The school wants to make communication between parents and teachers more detailed, frequent and collaborative.

Because Wolfram is getting frequent updates about her daughter's educational highs and lows, there are no surprises come report card time. Eventually, the district is hoping to phase out periodic report cards in favor of regular, descriptive communication and a year-end summary or portfolio review, [Surrey school district Superintendent Jordan Tinney](#) said.

"We're trying to boil it down to what do parents really want and need to know about a child's progress in school? How can we give parents a window into class?" Tinney said.

"We believe traditional report cards are highly ineffective in communicating to parents where their children are in learning. If we can communicate this learning routinely to parents, then we see the need for report cards and the stamp of letter grade going way down."

**We believe traditional report cards are highly ineffective in communicating to parents where their children are in learning.**

Surrey school district Superintendent Jordan Tinney

### Separating achievement from behavior

The philosophy behind standards-based grading is generally consistent from school to school, but it can look a lot different in practice.

At Georges Vanier and other Surrey elementary schools, it means abandoning letter grades for a color-coded sliding scale with cues like "approaching expectations" and "meeting expectations." Nearby elementary schools serving the Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows communities rank student comprehension as "emerging," "developing" or "applying," and hold "student-led," in-person reporting conferences twice a year instead of sending home formal report cards.

A - Excellent	1 - Strong Effort	O - Outstanding Achievement
B - Good	2 - Normal Effort	S - Satisfactory Achievement
C - Average	3 - Little Effort	I - Improvement Needed
D - Unsatisfactory *		

	1	2	3	4	5	6		1	2
MATHEMATICS	B	C	B	B	B	B		S	S
Computation - can do fundamental operations necessary at his level								O	O
Concepts								S	S
Application								S	O
								S	S
READING	C	C	B	A	A	C			
Reads above grade level									
Reads on grade level									
Reads below grade level	L	L	L	L	L				
LANGUAGE									
Expresses ideas well orally									
Expresses ideas clearly and correctly in written work									
Spelling									
Handwriting									
SCIENCE									
HEALTH									





## Using Tablets to reach kids with autism

Head of the Class Schools Thought from CNN, Heather Kelly

Complete article at [http://www.cnn.com/2014/04/09/tech/innovation/autism-tablet-apps/index.html?hpt=hp\\_bn5](http://www.cnn.com/2014/04/09/tech/innovation/autism-tablet-apps/index.html?hpt=hp_bn5)

When the iPad made its debut in 2010, it was hailed as something of a miracle device and there was a rush among parents of kids with autism to get the \$499 gadget.

"They were throwing them at their kids expecting miracles, but it didn't happen. The reason is they are tools, not miracles,"

### ARTICLE HIGHLIGHTS

- *Flumox and Friends app is a comedy show that helps kids with social skills.*
- *Tablets are popular with parents and educators but not used to full potential.*

Two 5-year-old boys, one with autism, were having some friendly playtime when they had a communication breakdown. One boy didn't respond to the other and walked

away. The ignored kid got frustrated and pushed over a small staircase, causing the first boy to fall.

Their speech therapist, Jordan Sadler, decided to address the issue by recreating it in an iPad app called [Puppet Pals](#). She restaged the scenario as a movie, even taking photos of the room for the background and of the kids for the characters. Using the app to show an instant replay of the scuffle, Sadler and the kids identified what went wrong and then recreated the scene, this time making better decisions.

Creating custom stories to help kids learn communication skills or understand complex situations is just one of the ways parents, therapists and educators have taken advantage of tablets to work with kids with autism.

### Tablets as tools, not miracles

said Shannon Rosa, an author and former educational software producer who has written about using tablets with her own son, Leo, who has autism. "I think a lot of parents now are more realistic about the level of support that is needed to help kids use them."

Four years later, tablets still play a big role in the autism community. But the expectations for the technology have come down to earth a bit. Now app creators, autism educators and parents are exploring new ways of using tablets and apps to work with the [1 in 68 kids](#) in the U.S. with autism.

They've had time to discover what works best for kids with autism when it comes to tablets. The uses vary from child to child, and often the best apps aren't even created with kids with autism in mind.

Tablets give kids much more control than they have with a TV. They can hold a tablet in their hands and have a more intimate experience with a story or game. Watching clips and shows repeatedly is common among children with autism, and with tablets they can rewatch favorite segments over and over.

## How some college are offering free textbooks

Head of the Class Schools Thought from CNN, Emanuella Grinberg

Complete report at [http://www.cnn.com/2014/04/18/living/open-textbooks-online-education-resources/index.html?hpt=hp\\_bn11](http://www.cnn.com/2014/04/18/living/open-textbooks-online-education-resources/index.html?hpt=hp_bn11)

. . The 22-year-old caught a break this term when she found out her physics course materials were free. Instead of asking students to buy a textbook from a major publishing company, Ryen's professor assigned a free digital textbook that he customized for the class.

Ryen's professor, Erik Christensen, began exploring the format in 2007, when a student asked to borrow a textbook because he couldn't afford one. While looking around for affordable alternatives, Christensen came across the concept of [open-source textbooks](#), or course materials offered for free online by their authors under a nonrestrictive license.

This year, it saved Ryen from having to decide which books to buy, and enabled her to spend \$230 on biology course materials, she says. It makes other parts of her life easier, too: She can read her physics textbook on her smartphone before her bartending shift or between classes. "I think it's great. I use it whenever I can find time to study," she said. "It helps in those moments when you have a little bit of extra

time in a place where you wouldn't normally bring a bulky textbook."

Open textbooks are catching on among educators and institutions looking to save students money. A 2014 study by [The Student Public Interest Research Groups](#), which advocates for open textbooks, found that textbook costs are [detering students from purchasing assigned materials](#) and impacting their course selection -- and schools are starting to take notice.

"The degree of unaffordability is getting to the point that it's hurting learning," said [David Wiley](#), co-founder of [Lumen Learning](#), which helps schools adopt open educational resources.

Then why aren't open textbooks more common? Many educators say they are content with proprietary textbooks and don't want to alter their class syllabus for a new text -- a time-consuming task.

Others believe open textbooks don't face the same academic or editorial scrutiny as proprietary texts, which is true with some versions. The nonprofit [College Open Textbooks](#), which promotes awareness and adoption of open textbooks, [said in a 2012 report](#) that "copy editing is an issue" with many open texts, noting that "if [they] were to have the same editing quality as proprietary textbooks, they would proliferate faster."



### THE ALTERNATIVE

1. Rent at the cost of 33% to 55% of new price
2. Buy used at 30%
3. Save 60% using an e-reader or smart device
4. Open source movement-living book (see above)

#### Diversity Connection Editor Comment

Read the rest of the article online regarding "Creating a Living Textbook". Can this be accomplished in high school or safe only for higher ed?





**PBS. Education**

## Digital Resources

Strengthen your students' literacy skills with PBS LearningMedia! Use the featured resources below to help students expand their vocabulary and familiarity with the works of notable authors:

### Reading Buddies Program

**Grades K-5 | Collection | Group Reading Activities**

Help your kindergarten and elementary students increase their vocabulary, develop self-esteem, and enhance their love of reading with this collection from MARTHA SPEAKS!

### Wordball Games

**Grades 1-3 | Media Gallery | Foundational Skills**

Invite students to join The Electric Company crew as they define sports-themed words like "score," "penalty," and "compete."

### American Masters: Salinger

**Grades 9-12 | Collection | Notable Authors**

Introduce students to the widely popular novel, "The Catcher in the Rye" and its mythic author, J.D. Salinger using the videos and images in this collection.



## Map, Interactive: **Engineering Map of America**

*Other Interactive Maps*

Explore America's greatest engineering feats through our interactive map. Dozens of museums, institutions and PBS stations have partnered with American Experience to bring you archival images, documents and videos related to America's engineering history.

If you are interested in contributing materials on behalf of an organization, please email [american\\_experience@wgbh.org](mailto:american_experience@wgbh.org) to become a partner.

powered by **historypin**  
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/interactive-map/penn-engineering/>

## Celebrate Winnebago Women Indian Stories on DVD

Instructors could use them for history, culture and human development studies. Excellent examples of the oral tradition, the stories are told by the women who experienced them rather than as interpretations by others. These films bring back something we need to do in our own families. The length ranges from 15 to 22 minutes, which makes them attractive viewing in the classroom or at home." --**Tribal College Journal**. Each DVD is 15-22 minutes inspiring conversations about family bonds.

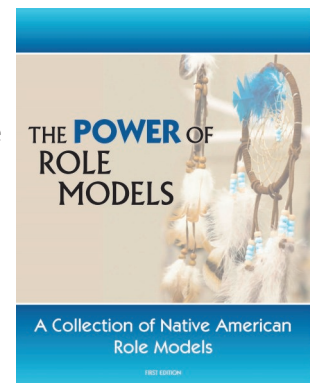
[http://herownwords.com/html/american\\_indian\\_women.html](http://herownwords.com/html/american_indian_women.html)



## Power of Role Models

An interactive environment and updates in the lives and careers of many people featured on the UNMC SEPA role model poster series. Embedded videos, live links to websites.

Available ibook and pdf  
[www.education.ne.gov/ne/books/ebooks](http://www.education.ne.gov/ne/books/ebooks)







## What peaks in early childhood....

**It's your brain. But don't worry, adult brains can still form new memory-building networks.**

**1** To keep your brain memory active  
Play brain games. Double Decision has been hailed as a brain improving computer game. A government study published said Double Decision reversed and decline brain functions associated with aging. The study knows as ACTIVE following individuals for 6 years who played this came regularly. Those individual has a 50% lower rate of car accidents following cognitive training. AARP is offering discounts for this game.

**2** Eat the right foods  
Memory food include antioxidant, colorful fruits and vegetables. Red meat is a brain memory sucker.

**3** Quit multitasking  
Like Mark McDaniel, a Ph.D. professor and memory research at Washington University, "One reason people can't remember where their keys are is they're not paying attention when they put them down." Studies show it takes 8 seconds to fully commit a piece of information to memory. It is important to concentrate on one task at a time.

**4** Master a new skill  
A Swedish study found adult learning a new language increased memory for people's names. Basically any activity/function practiced thoroughly will work.

**5** Get more sleep  
We all wish for this one. University of Pennsylvania found if you lose half a night's sleep (3-4 hours) can hamper memory. The rule is 8 hours and it appears important as it is believed the memory shifts from temporary to long term within the brain. We are sleeping so short, we can't remember anything. Before bed—do not watch tv.

**6** Activity  
Regular activity relieves stress which makes it much easier to remember.



Don't worry, researchers from the University of Colorado at Boulder found that procrastination is genetic which can also be linked to a tendency to be impulsive.

The study was on their ability to set and maintain goals, procrastination and impulsivity. 181 identical twins and 166 fraternal pairs.

*Psychological Science* conducted another study of 663 same sex twins with the average age of 23, the question that arose, "Is procrastination an evolutionary byproduct of impulsivity? Or do we act impulsively because we box ourselves in tight corners by procrastinating and force quick decisions."

<http://www.psychologicalscience.org/index.php/news/releases/exploring-the-genetics-of-ill-do-it-tomorrow.html>

## The Meeting Place

Save the Date

### Latino Summit

October 20, 2014 • Lincoln Cornhusker Hotel

Gallery of Stars Information: Heather Richey  
Heather.richey@nebraska.gov

Sponsor:

Nebraska Department of Education

### Hastings Middle School

(2014 National Breakthrough  
School Award Winner)  
Hastings Nebraska



### The Adolescent Brain: It's Not an

**OXYMORON**

**NEBRASKA**  
*Middle Level*  
**ACADEMY**  
Supporting Educators in Grades 4-9

### Professional Development Especially for 4th-9th Grade Educators

Registration- \$75 <http://nmla.shutterfly.com>  
2 paid teachers, and administrator is FREE

May-28-29

Save the Date

### HEALTHY YOUTH NEBRASKA:

Addressing Risks, Resiliency & Barriers to Success  
September 2014 • Grand Island • 7:45-am-4:30 pm

Keynote: Dr. Jeff Perry

Breakouts: Bully Intervention, Cultural Simulation, Adolescent  
Digital Behavior Working with LGBTQ Youth

Sponsors:

Nebraska Department of Education, Nebraska Department of Human Services, YWCA Adams County



**Ramsey Musallam**  
Wednesday Keynote  
Via Skype

Secondary and post-secondary level  
science instructor that is committed to  
using the classroom environment to  
promote inquiry and critical thinking.



**Mary Appleget**  
Thursday Keynote

Co-Founder and Chief Executive  
Officer, author, educator and now  
business owner calls it her main  
personal objective to provide leadership  
to the education community in ways that  
will inspire and motivate all those  
involved with teaching and learning.  
The public schools in Nebraska districts  
for 22 years, her influence, innovative  
action research and passion for the brain  
and knowing how it learns led her to  
seek leadership beyond the public  
school platform. Mary chose to further  
her own education, entrepreneurship and  
the self-publishing of her own

Register NOW

### SEPA SUMMER WORKSHOP

Aiding and Abetting Classroom Instruction  
June 17-19 OR Aug 4-6 • So Sioux City

Register:

[unmc.edu/rhen/SEPA\\_Teacher\\_Workshop.htm](http://unmc.edu/rhen/SEPA_Teacher_Workshop.htm)

Reserve your spot for FREE by May 24. Limited to 20 teachers  
Contact Kim Soper at 308-726-5536 or [kims@im-usa.org](mailto:kims@im-usa.org)

Sponsors:

Great Plains Tribal Chairman's Health Board, SEPA, University of Nebraska Medical Center

## Grants and Funding Student, Students and Teachers ONNECTION

### State Farm/Youth Advisory Board

State Farm and the Youth Advisory Board are offering  
grants for service-learning projects that include K-12  
students at public schools and focus on closing the  
achievement gap, arts and culture, or improving financial  
literacy. Maximum award: \$100,000. Eligibility: public  
schools and districts, non-profits, colleges and universities,  
and governmental organizations. Deadline: May 2, 2014.

### Captain Planet Foundation: Ecotech Grants

The Captain Planet Foundation, in partnership with the  
Ray C. Anderson Foundation, is offering grants for the  
purpose of engaging children in inquiry-based projects in  
STEM fields (Science, Technology, Engineering and  
Math) using innovation, biomimicry/nature-based  
design, or new uses for technology to address  
environmental problems in their communities.  
Maximum award: \$2,500. Eligibility: schools or non-profit  
organizations. Deadline: May 31, 2014.



Newsletter Editor: Carol Rempp  
[carol.rempp@nebraska.gov](mailto:carol.rempp@nebraska.gov)

Co-editor, Layout/Design: Peg Kirby  
[peg.kirby@nebraska.gov](mailto:peg.kirby@nebraska.gov)

[www.education.ne.gov/mce](http://www.education.ne.gov/mce)

301 Centennial Mall South  
Lincoln NE 68509

402 471 2960